

Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C.

June 19, 1939

EAT:TEB

Time 4 p. m.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SAC Sackett called from New Orleans and gave the following information concerning James Albert Noe to Mr. Rosen.

James Albert Noe was born at West Point, Kentucky on December 21, 1893. Here he received a very limited education in the country schools. When he was about 20 years of age he moved to Louisville, Kentucky where he became interested in the development of oil and natural gas. Thereafter he went to the Middle West where he made and lost money in the oil and gas business as it fluctuated. He enlisted in U. S. Army during the World War and served over seas. He was promoted through the grades to the position of lieutenant in the 369th Infantry. He married Anna Gray Sweeney, a school teacher, who was a member of a very old Louisiana family, on May 7, 1922. He has at the present time two children, both boys, ages 16 and 11 years. He came to Monroe, Louisiana in 1923 to make his home there and continued in the oil and natural gas business. He operated in Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas and was very successful. Shortly after coming to Monroe he met the late Senator Huey P. Long and became very friendly with him as years passed. He was one of Long's most vigorous supporters.

Noe was indicted April 8, 1925 in the Federal Court at Monroe, Louisiana on eight counts for violation of Section 215, U. S. Penal Code, on charges of having used the mails to defraud in connection with the sale of spurious oil stocks, apparently. He was indicted with one Y. E. Hildreth. On April 7, 1926 Hildreth pled guilty and was fined \$500.00. Noe stood trial and was acquitted by a jury on April 17, 1926.

Noe first sought political office in 1932 when he was elected to the State Senate in Louisiana. Thereafter he became even more closely associated with Huey Long, helping him in every way he could.

RECORDED & INDEXED

65-3254-16  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
JUN 27 1939  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
TULSA, OKLA.

Mr. Tolson  
Mr. Nathan  
Mr. Clegg  
Mr. Coffey  
Mr. Egan  
Mr. Glavin  
Mr. Crowl  
Mr. Harbo  
Mr. Lester  
Mr. Lawler  
Mr. Nichols  
Mr. Rosen  
Mr. Tracy  
Mr. Quinn Tamm  
Miss Gandy

I showed this to A.B.

Earl 6/20/39

MEMO FOR THE DIRECTOR

- 2 -

6-19-39

Mr. Sackett stated that during the famous radio investigation of the New Orleans city administration in 1934 at which time Huey Long aired the difficulties in New Orleans, Noe acted as Presiding Officer and faithfully carried out Long's orders. In 1934 Noe was appointed President pro tem of the State Senate and in 1935 when Lieutenant Governor John B. Fornet was elected to the State Supreme Court Noe was advanced to the Lieutenant Governorship.

On March 22, 1932 the U. S. Internal Revenue Service filed a tax lien against Noe for \$1,684.94, due to underpayment of 1928 income taxes. This lien was later dismissed.

During the latter part of 1935 Noe indicated a desire to run for the Governorship but withdrew in favor of Richard W. Leche who was nominated and, in fact, elected in the latter part of 1935. Leche was to take office on May 12, 1936. About this time Governor Oscar Kelly Allen was nominated U. S. Senator of Louisiana on January 21, 1936. Governor Allen, however, died on January 28, 1936 and Noe was sworn in as Governor the same day. He acted as Governor until Leche took office on May 12, 1936. Since this date Noe has served as Senator of Louisiana from the Ouachita-Jackson-Parrish District. He has continued to live in Monroe with his family and also engages in the oil and gas business. He is reputed to be very wealthy at the present time. At the time he was friendly with Huey Long he secured some state oil lease lands and it was from these lands that he originally obtained his money. Noe broke with Leche and Leche's administration during the second legislature after Leche was elected Governor which was in the latter part of 1936. Since this time Noe has been a very bitter foe of the Leche administration.

Noe announced his candidacy for the Governorship eight months ago and has since been trying to secure the support of the public by criticizing the Leche administration. He is alleged to have obtained a great deal of evidence against Leche and his administration.

45

MEMO FOR THE DIRECTOR

- 3 -

6-19-39

*Included*

According to Mr. Sackett, Mr. Charles ~~Nutter~~, head of the Associated Press in New Orleans, has advised him that Noe is presently in Washington telling everything he knows to the Attorney General in an effort to have an investigation of Leche made. Mr. Sackett stated that you and the Attorney General had met Mr. Nutter when you were in New Orleans.

Noe at one time during Long's regime was Chairman of the Board of Supervisors at Louisiana State University. Noe is a Presbyterian by faith. Noe is very well liked in the northern part of Louisiana particularly, because in the minds of the people he has been a very loyal friend to Huey Long.

Mr. Sackett stated the above information was secured by going through newspaper morgues; from personal memory; and other sources.

Mr. Sackett stated that he has a very good friend, a Mr. Clark Salmon, who is Managing Editor of the Item-Tribune, which paper favors the present administration. Mr. Sackett said that Mr. Salmon would have a great deal of information of the "off-the-record" activities of Noe and that Salmon would be glad to furnish this information. Mr. Salmon can be trusted according to Mr. Sackett. Mr. Sackett stated you met Mr. Salmon when you were in New Orleans.

Mr. Sackett inquired as to whether it was desired for him to contact Mr. Salmon and secure additional information in regard to Noe. Mr. Rosen told Mr. Sackett that he would be notified in the event it was desired that he contact Mr. Salmon.

Respectfully,

  
E. A. TAMM

*dt*

**Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice**

**New Orleans, La.  
July 3, 1939.**

Mr. Tolson	.....
Mr. Nathan	.....
Mr. E. A. Tamm	.....
Mr. Clegg	.....
Mr. Coffey	.....
Mr. Egan	.....
Mr. Glavin	.....
Mr. Crowl	.....
Mr. Harbo	.....
Mr. Lester	.....
Mr. Lawler	.....
Mr. Nichols	.....
Mr. Rosen	.....
Mr. Sears	.....
Mr. Quinn Tamm	.....
Mr. Tracy	.....
Miss Gandy	.....

**Director,  
Federal Bureau of Investigation,  
Washington, D. C.**

**Re: LOUISIANA STATE OFFICIALS;  
INFORMATION CONCERNING.**

**Dear Sir:**

I am transmitting herewith the Bureau's copies of the report of Special Agent C. W. DUNKER, New Orleans, dated July 2, 1939, setting out details of interviews conducted with State Senator JAMES A. NOE, State Treasurer A. P. TUGWELL, and other individuals concerning the general situation in the State of Louisiana, and also giving the details of the 5% salary contributions made by State employees to the Louisiana State Political Party.

These interviews and information concerning the 5% salary contributions were made pursuant to the request of U. S. Attorney RENE A. VIOSCA at New Orleans, with the approval of the Director, and it is, therefore, respectfully requested that you authorize me to furnish MR. VIOSCA with one copy of the report mentioned.

Very truly yours,

*B. E. Sackett*  
B. E. Sackett,  
Special Agent in Charge.

BES:WH  
62-978

AIRMAIL-SPECIAL DELIVERY

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION JUL 8 1939 U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
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AT NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

The following investigation was conducted by Special Agents  
R. L. SHIVERS and C. W. DUNKER

On June 30, 1939, between 11:00 a.m. and 12:10 p.m., JAMES A. NOE, State Senator from Monroe, Louisiana, was interviewed in Room 730, St. Charles Hotel. Pursuant to instructions from Special Agent in Charge B. E. SACKETT, NOE was requested to come to the New Orleans Division Office; however, NOE advised that he did not want to take the attitude that he was running to the office for help, but wanted to be honest and was going to devote his money and efforts to cleaning up Louisiana politics. He further advised that he was being followed, and if it was found out he came to the New Orleans Division Office, it would result in unfavorable publicity; that he would, however, cancel all appointments in event Mr. SACKETT wished to talk to him at the hotel.

In this connection, NOE advised that he received two anonymous telephone calls which had threatened him to "lay off." NOE inquired as to the reason for interviewing him, and he was advised that agents had been instructed to interview him for the purpose of obtaining information which might indicate a violation in which the United States is or might be a party in interest, involving a violation of the law over which the Bureau had investigative jurisdiction. At this time NOE was requested to keep the interview in confidence. NOE did not indicate that he would keep the interview in confidence, and advised he had previously promised DREW PEARSON of the Washington Merry-Go-Round and McCOORMICK of the Chicago Tribune that he would give them all the information he received, and which they would publicize throughout the country, as he believed these men were honest and would assist him in this fight.

NOE advised that with reference to the 5% kickback, usually 40% government funds are used in the project and about 50% State funds, which go together in the general fund of the Highway Department; that a certain portion is paid to the contractor, and a certain portion is paid to the supervisors, which would result in their getting 40% government money, and the supervisors in turn are required to kick back 5% of their salaries to the heads of the departments, as well as the people working for the contractors; that this 5%, after being collected from the heads of the departments, is reported to be turned over to ROBERT MAESTRI, and is reported to amount to over a million dollars a year. NOE advised that CHESTER MARTIN probably could give more detailed information relative to the kickback.

NOE advised that with reference to the bridge at Baton Rouge, he had received information that part Federal money went into the project, and that the employees were required to kick back 5%; that in this project the employees are paid out of mingled Federal and State funds. He advised that one of the engineers on the project, whose name NOE would not mention, claimed that the politicians were stealing \$800,000 on the project, but NOE would not explain how this was being taken.

NOE advised that a lot of equipment was purchased for the Louisiana Polytechnic Institute at Ruston, Louisiana by State and Federal money, and it was arranged whereby the Standard Office & Supply Company, Monroe, Louisiana, would make a bid of between \$60,000 and \$70,000 dollars on the furniture, which bid they did receive. He advised that upon delivering certain furniture and fixtures, one of the teachers at the school objected to the goods delivered not being up to specifications whereupon ABERNATHY called the Governor, and the Governor instructed the school to accept the fixtures. He advised that about \$30,000 was reported to have been made on this deal; that KILPATRICK of the Standard Office & Supply Company, using ABERNATHY'S influence, sold office furniture and fixtures to schools and court houses all over the State.

NOE advised that he had already supplied the Attorney General with copies of affidavits relative to irregularities in the WPA and understood that the Bureau received copies. He advised that he was getting three additional affidavits from men who put bricks in a house of RICHARD LECHE and marked the bricks when they put them in for future identification, and that these bricks used were WPA bricks. NOE advised that the Maxwell Supply Company of Houston, Texas sold a certain kind of mud which was used in oil wells and was absolutely necessary to drilling; that all the oil companies in Louisiana are forced to buy mud from this company, and that Governor LECHE was head of this company.

NOE advised that EARL K. LONG has purchased a great deal of property in New Orleans and in Winnfield, Louisiana, and has large herds of cattle; that LONG has sold thousands of dollars worth of cattle to the State institutions. NOE advised he is presently checking LONG'S property holdings.

He advised that STANLEY BEHRMAN and HAMPTON REYNOLDS have separate contracting companies; that they sell cement to WPA and FWA and are the only companies that are permitted to bid on this material; that they will alternate in their bidding, one bidding high and one bidding low; that REYNOLDS fictitiously has his company at Birmingham, Alabama, so it will look better. He advised that no other companies are permitted in any way to interfere with the operation of these two companies in their bidding on projects as aforesaid. He advised that WILLIAM J. HAYS, another contractor, bid on a job in New Orleans and obtained the job; that he was the lowest bidder, but that MAESTRI closed down this project; that they went out and found how much profit HAYS would make on the job and paid HAYS \$6,000, whereupon HAYS quit the job and one of the other companies took it over; that HAYS is now in California and is afraid to talk, but that his wife would "talk her head off."

NOE advised that he received information from a person whose name he would not mention but who was present at the time LECHE resigned, that ROBERT MAESTRI and EARL K. LONG told LECHE he would have to resign



but that LECHE did not want to do so as he was trying to make a come-back by exposing SMITH; that LECHE did not want to quit and cried like a baby when he was forced to. NOE further advised that he presently has a man working for him who is right next to LONG and will keep him advised of everything that goes on, but he would not mention this man's name.

With reference to vote frauds, NOE claimed that JIMMY MORRISON of Hammond, Louisiana had affidavit of vote frauds which took place in the last election (this has already apparently been checked).

NOE stated that in making his investigation he had tried to protect Dr. SMITH as he felt that Dr. SMITH was all right, and he believed that Dr. SMITH became dishonest because he saw everyone else taking graft and decided he would take some himself. NOE advised that the set-up in the State was that EARL K. LONG, RICHARD W. LECHE and ROBERT MAESTRI were the ring leaders, while E. N. JACKSON, GLEN SHERRY, SHIRLEY WIMBERLY, GEORGE CALDWELL and T. P. HENRY are under them in the political graft. NOE appeared cooperative and he undoubtedly has some pertinent information relative to a general check-up of the State graft and additional affidavits of various irregularities. He indicated that he was not convinced that Washington would carry through any investigation started, due to the fact that previously some indictments had been returned against prominent people but were dismissed.

NOE advised, off the record, that he understood the half-wit brother of Dr. SMITH had caused a niece of this brother, who is about 13 years of age, to become pregnant and married her; that a Caesarian operation was finally necessary, which was paid for by Dr. SMITH.